Change in WTO proposals

865. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government had pressed for change in WTO proposals in the interest of our farmers and nascent industries during hard negotiation in Geneva in May, 2008;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the ultimate outcome of the discussions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Throughout the Doha Round negotiations on agriculture and Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA) at the World Trade Organisation (WTO), India has been voicing its concerns strongly, wherever it felt that the proposals under consideration had fallen short of its expectations and requirements.

In the agriculture negotiations, substantial and effective reductions in domestic support and tariffs in agriculture by developed countries, while enabling developing countries to protect and promote the interests of their low income and resource poor farmers, is a key priority for India. India has been working closely with its developing country partners in the G-20 and G-33 coalitions towards this end.

In the negotiations on NAMA, India, along with its coalition partners in the NAMA 11, has been negotiating for flexibilities that are both adequate and appropriate for protecting its sensitive sectors and nascent industries from the impact of tariff reductions or bindings.

(c) The Doha Round of trade negotiations is still in progress. A mini-Ministerial meeting was held at the WTO in July, 2008 with the objective of finalizing agriculture and NAMA modalities. The meeting, however, ended without reaching an agreement, because while progress was made on some issues, there were many others that could not be discussed at all or on which there were persisting differences amongst Members. Based on subsequent discussions at the WTO, revised draft proposals were issued on 6 December, 2008, which will be further discussed and negotiated.

India's poor ranking in business

866. SHRI RAHUL BAJAJ:
SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether India was ranked 122nd amongst 181 countries by the World bank in case of doing business lower than even Pakistan; and